

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman Michael A. Arcuri (D-NY) today announced that the House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee has approved their request for \$3.65 million to help construct a new state-of-the-art grape genetics research facility for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The House members requested the funds as part of the Agriculture Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2011.

"I worked to have this money included in the appropriations bill this year because the grape industry is a crucial part of New York's economy," said Hinchey, who is a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. "Once these funds get final approval, we will have secured a total of more than \$20 million for the construction of this facility, bringing us one important step closer towards putting shovels in the ground to build a modern, expanded facility that will allow our nation's leading grape experts to identify ways to grow and develop grapes in the most effective way."

"Specialty crops like grapes are a critical part of our Upstate New York economy," said Arcuri. "This funding is part of a committed effort to help our local growers become national leaders in grape cultivation and production, which will help the industry grow, and ultimately lead to more jobs, economic opportunity, and tourism in the region."

The funds that Hinchey and Arcuri obtained from the House will go toward construction of the ARS facility that will focus on research programs to make U.S. grape growers and grape products more competitive. The Center for Grape Genetic Research will replace the current outdated ARS facilities in Geneva with a state-of-the-art research building. Congress has previously appropriated a total of nearly \$16.8 million for the center. ARS has completed planning, design, and site prep work. The agency is ready to commence construction as soon as the balance of construction funds is appropriated.

Building the Center for Grape Genetics Research will allow ARS to expand the current research program from eight positions currently devoted to grape genetics to approximately 30 positions (12 scientists, 18 technicians and other support personnel). Scientists at the Center for Grape Genetic Research focus their research on: improving the yield and quality of wine, table, and juice grapes; developing strategies to fight plant diseases and pests that afflict vineyards; helping farmers implement sound environmental practices; and promoting the long-term sustainability of the wine and grape industry in New York and throughout the country.

The \$7 billion New York wine and grape industry supports more than 900 family owned vineyards, 200 wineries, and 3,700 jobs. New York is the third largest wine producing state in

the country, with the second largest wine consuming population. Three million people visit New York wineries each year, with over one-third of visitors coming from out-of-state. Research is one of the keys to continued growth of the wine and grape industry.